

Nunn's Station

Historic Power Plant Marked at Canyon Site

By LARRY WEIST

"This scheme is a gigantic one and will add greatly to Provo's prosperity," read an 1895 editorial from the Provo Daily Enquirer. It continued, "This finest water power to be found in the new state (Utah was admitted to the Union Jan. 4, 1896) ought to be utilized, not only for a power plant, but for more factories."

The editorial referred to the Nunn Station, some three miles up Provo Canyon.

Though abandoned as a power station for many years, Nunn Station still stands and is owned by Utah Power & Light Co. In 1970, the Utah Historical Society registered it as a national historical site.

Electrical development in this area sometimes forged ahead of that of the industry nationwide, and, in the process, some of the industry firsts and technical contributions were achieved. The Nunn Station had a resounding impact on Utah's development.

Prior to UP&L's organization in 1912, electric service in Utah was furnished by three large UP&L predecessor companies and small enterprises confined to population centers, and not yet united into one unit.

The Telluride Power Company was one of these predecessor companies. Headed by an entrepreneur named L.L. Nunn, the company earlier had built a power system in southwestern Colorado centering around the mining area of Telluride.

Seeking other hydroelectric sites in the intermountain region, Nunn informed directors of Telluride Power of his intent to appropriate waters of the Provo River for hydroelectrical generation.

Provo City at that time was a quiet little village made up almost entirely of Mormon residents and was a trading center for the rich irrigated farm country on the shores of Utah Lake.

Partly to avoid the resentment against outsiders, and partly to keep operations separate from the power company, investigations and preliminary work were carried on under the name of L.L. Nunn, trustee.

In May 1896, Nunn had 75 men at work on a flume and dam in the canyon and had approached Provo City officials for a street - lighting contract.

But as work progressed and it became known that an 80-foot dam was to be built, local support changed to opposition. Someone recalled a disaster in Box Elder County resulting from a broken dam, and the Johnstown flood of 1889, just seven years before, which took more than 2,000 lives. Many became apprehensive and publicized their uneasiness.

By June, the matter had reached the city council, and speakers condemned the proposed dam as a menace to factories along the river. Some said that the dam would depreciate property and that farmers depending upon water would suffer great loss through evaporation from the reservoir.

There also was discussion that the water used to generate electric power would lose some mysterious essence that might make it ineffective later for irrigation usage in the valley. This notion that farmers would suffer recalled a similar rumor that had plagued the Telluride Power Company in Colorado in earlier years.

The Nunn Station began generation of power at the end of 1897. Cost of construction including dam, flume and penstocks, was approximately \$50,000. UP&L said it would cost about \$330,000 today to build the plant.

The mining loads in Utah were the principal

attractions for L. L. Nunn, and upon completion of the Nunn Station, the first high - voltage transmission line carried power 32 miles across Utah Valley to Captain De La Mar's Golden Gate Mill at Mercur, high on the west flank of the Quirrh Mountains.

The power line skirted the north end of Utah Lake, a few miles west, and extended in a tangent over the mountain to the mill. Transmission was at 44,000 volts, stepped down to 220 volts to drive mill motors.

L.L. Nunn's transformer house, today in ruins on the mountainside, was a substantial building; it constitutes the only walls of the old mill building still standing. It was built of three courses of hard - fired yellow ceramic brick, beautifully laid up.

The transmission line to Mercur, built in the summer of 1897, was the first such line in the United States (nearly three times the voltage of any other existing line) as well as the longest transmission line of any voltage.

The 32-mile line to the booming gold mining camp of Mercur was charged Jan. 7, 1898, and led to Mercur being recorded as the first completely electrically equipped mine and mill in the history of the industry.

Insulators for the line were specially designed and, because of their being used at this locality, became known as the Provo-type.

Volunteer Organization

Utah Lake Flotilla: Coast Guard Public Service Arm

Where does a boater in Utah County go to get a free safety inspection, take classes on boating safety and get printed information about boating from the Utah Lake Flotilla.

The Flotilla is a local all-volunteer public service organization serving boaters in Utah County.

The flotilla, as the civilian arm of the U.S. Coast Guard, patrols marine events and regattas, and assists boatmen in distress.

In addition they are active in the auxiliary's courtesy motorboat examination program and in training and teaching safe boating to the public.

The county boating group is led by Flotilla Commander Woodrow Wilson of Payson. Other officers include: John Morgan, Orem, vice commander; Carol Hardy, Orem, secretary-treasurer; Patrick Jones, Orem, vessel examiner; and Vaughn Clayton, Orem, operations officer.

The Utah Lake Flotilla presently has about 20 members who have a total of nine boats.

Members meet once a month for social events and for training and updating on recent changes in regulations and procedures.

To become a member, interested individuals

must be a U.S. citizen, 17 years of age or older, must own at least 25 percent of a motorboat, yacht, aircraft or radio station, and possess a special qualification required by the auxiliary.

Classes available from the Auxiliary include navigation, life saving, rules of the road, first-aid, and boating safety.

The boating group also has many pamphlets on various aspects of boating that can be obtained by contracting the officers.

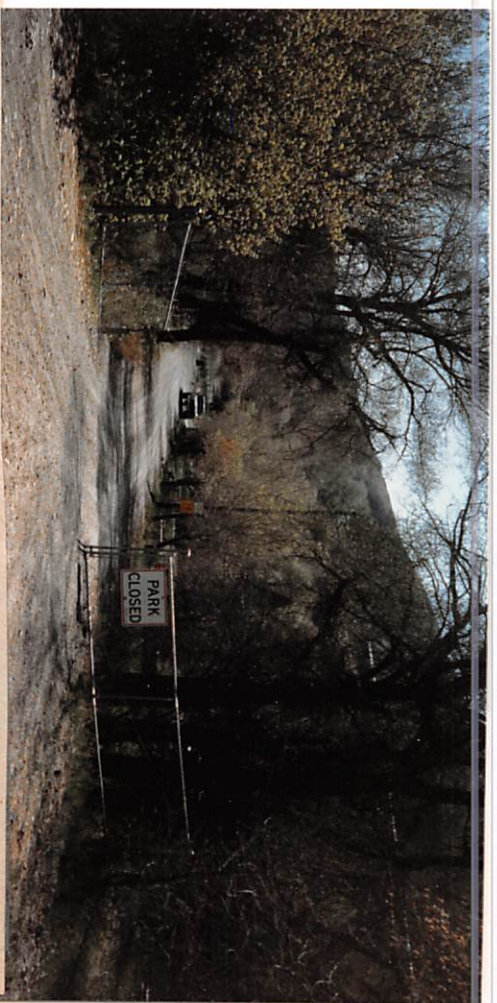
In the spring and at various other times during the year the flotilla established locations where boaters can bring their boats for free motorboat examination.

If safety deficiencies are found during the examination, no report is made to law enforcement agencies. The examiner just informs the owner so he can correct them.

If the boat passes, the examiner will attach a "Seal of Safety" decal that indicates that at the time of the examination the boat met the State safety-related equipment requirements. This seal is nationally recognized.

In addition to its safety programs the organization has joined in several search and rescue operations for lost boaters and aircraft.

TWO GO
UTAH



NUNN STATION at the mouth of Provo Canyon, now abandoned, was built by industry pioneer L.L. Nunn to furnish

power for mines at Mercur west of Utah Lake. The first 44,000 power line in the United States extended from this hydroelectric plant to Mercur, 32 miles to the northwest.